

ABSTRACT

A network switch includes multiple interface cards and a backplane that interconnects the interface cards. The interface cards receive network traffic and perform time and line switching on the data. The network traffic can include a combination of time division multiplexed (TDM) data and network data (e.g., ATM cells, IP packets). In one embodiment, the channels that carry network traffic to the interface cards are pre-configured as either TDM channels or network channels. The channels are processed as appropriate for their respective types by the interface cards. Because both TDM and network traffic can be processed by a single interface card, the number of cards within the network switch can be reduced.